

March 29, 2010

# Legislative Update 2010



Iowa Department of Human Services

## Special points of interest:

- \* Budget Update
- \* Vermeer on IPTV
- \* Hospital Tax

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## DHS Director's Column: "Now Let's Accomplish Our Mission To Serve"

The Session is nearing the end. We came out much better than it looked early on. Thanks to many staff people who contributed valuable input to legislators both at the Capitol and in personal contacts around the state. Thank you also to 5300 DHS employees who have been very patient and understanding of "the process". I put "the process" in quotes to emphasize that the democratic legislative environment is indeed that, a process. Sometimes misinformation abounds. But, in the end, it is the process that we have in a democracy and, most of the time, it works pretty well. Now our task in the Department is to use what the Legislature has given us to accomplish our mission of serving Iowans. Its not just "make do" but rather to do the best that we can within the resources available. This

year will continue to be challenging. We need to face those challenges and the changes that will come with the same positive determination that got us through the Session.

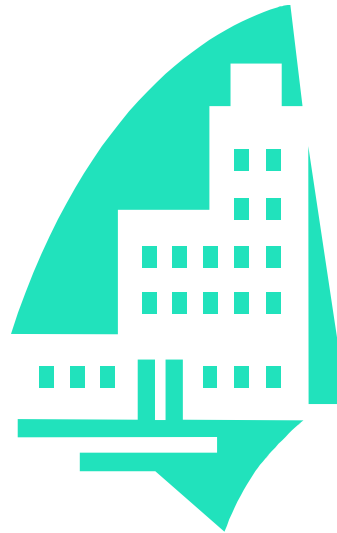
—Charlie Krogmeier



## Hospital Health Care Access Trust Fund

SF 2388 is the "Hospital Health Care Access Trust Fund" legislation otherwise known as the "hospital provider tax". Late last week the Senate and House moved quickly on this legislation which assesses a 1.26% fee on hospital revenues which will raise about \$40 million to be placed in a new hospital health care access trust fund. Hospitals will receive funds to increase their Medicaid reim-

bursements rates and the state general fund will benefit also. The state share will be used to draw down additional federal dollars. This assessment is set to sunset in three years. The IME provided many hours of technical assistance to policy makers as they crafted this legislation.



The Department thanks the Legislative Services Agency and Caucus staffs for their hard work on the DHS budget.

Director Krogmeier and Liaison Julie Fleming extend their gratitude to the Legislators who serve on the Human Services Budget Subcommittee.

## DHS Budget Update

Last week saw substantial changes to the DHS budget. On March 23 the Senate infused \$6,250,000 and 85 FTEs over the budget as initially passed by the House on March 18. During Senate debate on the bill Senator Jack Hatch (D-Des Moines) reminded that this budget is "relevant to friends and neighbors" in all legislative districts. Hatch maintained that the budget figures proposed "extends our most productive programs" and "takes steps to help families who struggle". Furthermore he argued that the budget "continues our commitment to Iowans with disabilities".

The cumulative impact of all the appropriations changes meant that the budget had been restored by \$25.6 million and 501 FTEs since the initial, dramatic budget targets at the start of the Session. The

House amended the Senate amendment on March 27<sup>th</sup> and made some further changes.

Although DHS budget will remain below current operating levels significant advances were made throughout the difficult budget process. Toledo will not have to close the boy's CINA cottage and Eldora will maintain current programming and accreditations. Field operations will remain below current operations and this will impact the Department's ability to provide child and adult protective services, child welfare services, food assistance and Medicaid services. MHI beds will be below current levels.

Other items of interest in the budget bill include an expansion of Family Planning Waiver, expanded eligibility for food assistance, new (one-time) funding for reducing

the waiting lists for Medicaid waiver services such as the children's mental health waiver which serves children who are seriously emotionally disturbed and who meet hospital level of care. This waiver provides in-home services to allow children to stay home rather than go to a hospital or psychiatric facility. The bill also authorizes federal TANF funds for Iowa Workforce Development to implement a summer youth program which subsidizes wages.

The Standings bill restored 25% of the rate reductions experienced in the Governor's 10% ATB cuts in December for child welfare providers. This \$1 million restoration was funded with another one-time funding source, the Underground Storage Tank Fund.

## Medicaid Director on IPTV

Jennifer Vermeer, Iowa Medicaid Director, joined a panel of experts to discuss the impact of federal health care reform on the IPTV program "Iowa Journal" on March 25<sup>th</sup>. The program can be viewed at the Iowa public Television website [www.iptv.org](http://www.iptv.org)



## Coffees with Charlie

Director Krogmeier wrapped up several months of weekly coffees with stakeholders visiting the Capitol during Session. This new initiative for the Department was viewed as a success by all the entities involved.



## Gratitude

DHS Legislative Liaison Julie Fleming extends thanks and gratitude to all the people in the Department who are part of the legislative effort. So many people analyze bills and amendments, contribute technical advice, complete fiscal analyses and requests for information from policy makers. Special

thanks to Ed Christensen who, in this his last Session before retirement, goes above and beyond the call of duty at all times to keep our legislative efforts on track. It is hard to imagine how the program will go on without him in future years. Also, Fleming extends thanks to DHS former liaisons

Kate Walton, Molly Kottmeyer and Karla Fultz-McHenry who were very supportive and helpful throughout the Session.

## Reminder: Please Complete Your Census Forms!

Please remember to complete your 2010 Census Forms. The Director of the US Census Bureau reminds us that "results from the 2010 Census will be used to help each community gets its fair share of government funds for highways, schools, health facilities and other programs you and your neighbors need."



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The Mission of the Iowa Department of Human Services is to help individuals and families achieve safe, stable, self-sufficient, and healthy lives, thereby contributing to the economic growth of the state. We do this by keeping a customer focus, striving for excellence, sound stewardship of state resources, maximizing the use of federal funding and leveraging opportunities, and by working with our public and private partners to achieve results.

[www.dhs.state.ia.us](http://www.dhs.state.ia.us)

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